

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

MARCH 18, 1858.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. IVERSON made the following

**REPORT.**

[To accompany Bill S. 207.]

*The Committee on Claims, to whom were referred the memorial and papers in the case of John Hastings, have carefully considered the same, and submit the following report :*

The committee have come to the conclusion that the prayer of the petitioner ought to be granted. The case was presented to the last Congress, and referred to the Committee on Claims of the Senate, who made an elaborate report thereon through their chairman, Mr. Broadhead. Your committee think that the principles and rule which ought to govern the action of the government in such cases are very well and properly stated in that report, and they meet the concurrence of this committee. That report is hereto annexed, and we beg leave to refer the Senate to the same, as containing a correct and somewhat detailed statement of the evidence which was before that committee and the Senate at the last session of Congress.

During the discussion of the case in the Senate at the last Congress, a letter from one Robert Hague to the Hon. John P. Hale, was read, which expressed the opinion that the alleged robbery of Mr. Hastings was a sham, and which stated some facts calculated, if true, to cast suspicion upon the truth of that allegation. Your committee deeming it proper to obtain all the information which would throw light upon the subject, placed Mr. Hague's letter in the hands of the Secretary of the Treasury, with the request that he would transmit the same to the United States district attorney at Pittsburg, with instructions to examine Mr. Hague, upon oath, as to the facts stated in that letter, and any other facts which he might be disposed to state bearing upon the subject. The letter was accordingly transmitted to Pittsburg, and Mr. Hague examined under oath. The examination, however, elicited no new fact. Mr. Hague simply verified, in general terms, the truth of the facts stated in his letter. The production of this letter against Mr. Hastings and the recent verification of it by the writer, caused Mr. Hastings to take the depositions of several witnesses, in addition to those originally filed in the case, and which were, shortly after the transaction, taken before the mayor of Pittsburg. These latter depositions fully sus-

tain the testimony previously taken in the case, and, in the opinion of the committee, remove all doubt of the fact that Mr. Hastings was attacked, very badly injured, knocked down, and robbed, on the occasion alluded to, as represented by him. There cannot now be the least doubt that he was thus robbed of the key of the vault where the money was kept, by ruffians and robbers, who immediately proceeded to the custom-house and were let into it by one of the watchmen, who was, probably, one of the three men who made the attack, and unlocked the vault with the stolen key, and abstracted the two bags of gold which were missed. Doubtless they intended, and attempted, to take the emptied bag of gold, but, in the darkness and hurry of the occasion, suffered it to fall upon the floor, and fearing that the sleeping watchman in the front room might awake and detect them, hastily retired, leaving the contents of that bag scattered on the floor of the vault.

This committee have strong reasons to believe that one of the watchmen was a *particeps criminis* in the robbery. Indeed, it is difficult to see how the robbers could have entered the house without the aid of some one having a key of the front room. The testimony taken in this case so completely disproves the suspicions thrown over it by Mr. Hague, that the committee attach no credit or strength to his statement; and believing that it is clearly established by a mass of testimony from witnesses of the highest character, that the facts stated by Mr. Hastings are true, and that he had no complicity whatever in the robbery, are of opinion that he ought to be relieved, and report a bill accordingly.